



Police Begin Bicycle Traffic Safety Initiative

The Charleston Police Department has begun a traffic safety initiative aimed at educating bicyclists regarding city ordinances and traffic laws pertaining to the operation of a bicycle in the city of Charleston. The initiative is being implemented because the use of bicycles has increased dramatically in the city.

The increase may be due to the fact that bicycles are economical, environmentally friendly and a great form of exercise. Whatever the case may be, city of Charleston officials recognized the need to improve bicycle conditions in the city and provide the public with an open forum to discuss bicycling and pedestrian issues.

This traffic safety initiative will provide bicyclist with information such as:

- All bicycles ridden in the city limits of the city of Charleston are required to have a city bicycle license. You must bring the bicycle to the police department at 180 Lockwood Blvd., along with your state issued ID/license. The cost of registration is a \$1.00. The information obtained can be used to return your bicycle to you if it is ever stolen and recovered.

- Bicycling on sidewalks in the city of Charleston is prohibited and bicyclists must yield the right of way to pedestrians.

In South Carolina, the bicycle is legally defined as a vehicle. Bicyclists using a public roadway are considered operators of motor vehicles and are responsible for observing traffic laws.

State law also has certain obligations for cyclists to follow:

- A cyclist riding in the roadway shall not ride more than two abreast, other than on designated bike lanes or paths.
- A cyclist shall not carry any object that prevents him from keeping at least one hand on the handlebars.
- A cyclist riding at night must have a light emitting white light visible from a distance of 500 feet on the front and a red reflector visible from 50 feet to 300 feet at the rear.
- A cyclist may not hold on to a vehicle on the roadway.
- A cyclist must stop at stop signs, except in bicycle designated lanes
- A cyclist shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable.

Officers will stop offending cyclists and issue them warnings, along with information regarding the proper operation of a bicycle. The warnings will be issued at first as a means of educating the public because many people were taught long ago to both walk and ride bicycles facing traffic, a practice now widely seen as dangerous, the reason it has now been outlawed.

The Charleston Police Department will work with the city's Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, with the advocacy group Charleston Moves and the recreation cycling group Coastal Cyclists, and with other local institutions including the College of Charleston and MUSC to educate the public on the proper operation of a bicycle in the city of Charleston.

If the violations continue after the education process has been implemented, officers will begin issuing summonses.

With few exceptions, there is only one road and it is up to bicyclists and motorists to treat each other with care and respect. Adherence to the law is the foundation of respect.